

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

lest, unless the remedy is applied of doing what has not been done, our sins may merit so much that we shall see worse disasters come; such, I mean, that would distress us more than the loss of temporal things. Of all these evils and of your sorrows, I, wretched woman, am the cause, through my little virtue and through my great disobedience. Most holy Father, mitigate your anger against me with the light of reason and with truth— not for my punishment, but for your anger.¹ To whom shall I have recourse, if you abandon me ? Who would succour me ? To whom can I fly, if you drive me away ? The persecutors are persecuting me, and I fly to you and to the other sons and servants of God. And if you abandon me, conceiving displeasure and indignation against me, I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified, whose vicar you are ; and I know that He will receive me, because He wills not the death of the sinner. And if I am received by Him, you will not drive me away ; nay, we shall stay in our place to fight manfully with the arms of virtue for the sweet Spouse of Christ. In her am I fain to end my life, with tears, with sweat, and with sighs, and to give my blood and the marrow of my bones. And if all the world should drive me away, I will not care, for I shall find rest, with weeping and with bearing much, on the breast of that sweet Spouse. Pardon me, most holy Father, for all my ignorance and for the offence I have committed against God and against your Holiness. Let the truth excuse me and set me free : Truth eternal. I humbly ask your blessing." ²

Raimondo had had no opportunity of seeing the Pope in person until the latter's return to Rome, on November 7. He then appears to have satisfied him concerning Catherine's conduct, as we find her declaring herself consoled by letters she had received from the " dolce babbo " and himself.⁸ She seems to have passed this Advent at the Rocca, much afflicted in body

¹ That is, " punish me as much as you will, but do not be unreasonably angry." I adopt the reading *mitigate col lume*, as in Aldo and Toresano, instead of the *mirate* of Gigli and Tommaseo.

^a Letter 267 (91).

⁸ Letter 272